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# Montana and the Sky

MDT- Department of Transportation

Aeronautics Division

Vol. 49 No. 3

March 1998

## Billings Aviation Conference = First Rate Event

More than five hundred aviation enthusiasts proved beyond a doubt that the Montana Aviation Conference is an event worth attending even when Mother Nature throws a fit. In spite of snow and closed roads in eastern Montana and North Dakota, the fourteenth annual Conference held in Billings, February 26 - 28, was a resounding success.

Fifty exhibitors from across the United States and Canada brought displays for the trade show. In addition, about a dozen owners had various aircraft, helicopter and homebuilt projects on display in the trade center of the Holiday Inn adding a special touch to those events conducted in that section of the hotel.

The kick-off luncheon on Thursday was attended by 275 people who heard Jim Coyne, President of the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) speak on the state of private and GA commercial aviation in the United States. Mr. Coyne expressed great concern over the new Clinton administration budget proposal and the new European rules regarding US flight school training of foreign student pilots.

Dr. Jerry Cockrell entertained folks with his presentation Thursday evening. Montana is very fortunate to have Dr. Cockrell appear year after year at our annual conference. Jerry shares his humor and wit and teaches safety, human factors and awareness. We laugh hysterically and later realize just how much we have learned while thoroughly enjoying ourselves.

A greater understanding of the problems and concerns affecting all facets of the aviation industry was gained through listening sessions, forums, and business meetings. Participants gleaned a great deal of useful information by their attendance at concurrent sessions which ran the gamut from technical information at the mechanics and ag seminars through topics of more general interest.

Friday's luncheon held in the exhibit hall treated many to the thousands of dollars worth of door prizes that were given away. The generosity of the many exhibitors, sponsors and others is overwhelming.

Friday evening's dinner was rudely interrupted when Rhonda the Rodeo Queen/Pilot YEE HAH!!! barged in.....entertaining all in a wild west style known and loved by Montanans. A group of very willing and enthusiastic members from the audience joined Rhonda in a closing song YEE HAH!. A hangar dance followed and was enjoyed by those who chose to "dance the night away!"

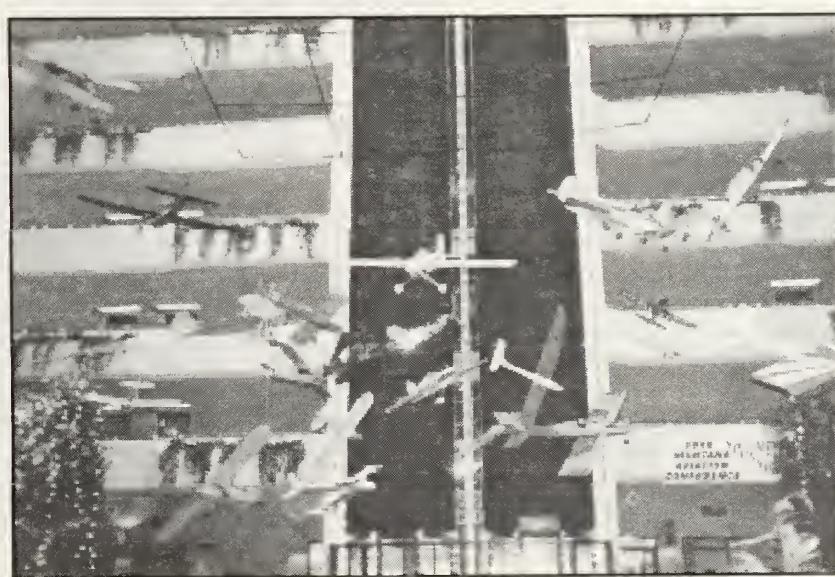
Saturday's luncheon speaker Betty Geiger-Darst of Dayton, Ohio, a noted historian treated attendees to a living biography and historical cameo of Wilbur and Orville Wright's sister Katharine Wright. Betty greeted luncheon participants in a copy of a 1909 Homecoming suit worn by Katharine on her brothers' return from Europe. Betty shared a remarkable personal account of the First Family of Aviation through a multimedia slide presentation and short vignettes based on Katharine's personal letters.

Banquet goers heard the wacky and witty

stunt pilot Dean Englehardt speak of successfully crashing 14 aircraft. Dean's humorous and illustrated talk portrayed the little known career of a motion picture stunt pilot.

Without the willingness of a small army of volunteers to participate in such a project, a Conference of this type would be impossible to organize. On behalf of the Montana Aeronautics Division and Board, our appreciation goes out to Tim McGinnis, chairman of the Conference Committee and to those who worked so closely and well with him: Bobi Allard; Gene Allard; Martin Elshire; Marian McGinnis; Allen Rickman; Wanda Rickman; Jim Roberts; Shelley Peterson; Steve Vold; Corrine Wilkins and Gary Wirrell. We would also like to express our appreciation to the many speakers who freely gave of their time and talent in sharing their expertise with Montana's aviation community.

Make plans now to attend the 1999 Montana Aviation Conference to be held February 25 - 27, 1999 at the Copper King Inn at Butte, America.



Members of the Billings Remote Control Aircraft Club suspended RC aircraft from the ceiling of the Holiday Inn. The aircraft provided a festive aviation atmosphere as one entered the lobby of the hotel. Club members also demonstrated building of an RC aircraft and raffled off an RC showpiece that will provide hours of fun for the winner.

# **Administrator's Column**

## **COURT RULES AGAINST**

**FAA ON USER FEE:** The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that the FAA's interpretation and implementation of the overflight fee's for aircraft flying through U.S. controlled airspace but do not take off or land from a U.S. airport is inconsistent with the intent of Congress when passing the Federal Aviation Authorization Act of 1996. The Court holds "that the fee structure imposed by the Interim Final Rule (62FR13496) was impermissibly based, at least in part, on the value of services to users." Overflight fees are only authorized for services which are DIRECTLY related to services rendered. National Air Transportation (NATA) President James Coyne commended the District Court's decision and stated "Congress did not intend to penalize general aviation and charter in allowing these fees. The FAA's interpretation and subsequent development of user fees was inconsistent with the basis of the rule." Coyne continued, "Circuit Judge Sentelle's decision will force the Agency to abandon its 'Ramsey pricing' models, a value-based system, for cost determination. This was the Agency's first attempt at establishing a user -fee-funded Air Traffic Control (ATC) system that clearly met significant resistance and ultimately died in the courts." Coyne added, "as Congress begins debate on the FY99 budget, this decision should send a clear message against the Administration's proposal transitioning from taxes to user fees."

\* \* \* \* \*

## **JAA REGULATION WILL**

**KILL U.S. TRAINING:** According to the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) the European Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) have adopted a new rule to take effect June 1999 aimed at U.S. flight training in their countries. The JAA rule will require U.S. flight training organizations to locate an office in the European country issuing the pilot certificate. NATA President Jim Coyne stated "The JAA rule threatens European access to the best flight training institutions in the world. It is a shame that American flight training schools are directly targeted in this rule under the cloak of aviation harmonization." The NATA is asking the FAA to support and defend U.S. aviation businesses against enforcement of this devastating new rule. Coyne further stated "We hope to raise the JAA issue to a level within the FAA that can relay the serious concerns of the Association's flight schools to the European community." I have had serious concerns for some time now about the European's continued attempts to force their costly anti general aviation rules throughout the world, especially the U.S. One only needs to fly a GA airplane in one of their countries to confirm how burdensome and costly it really is. It is even more concerning when we see how successful they have been and I feel

we are being "sold down the river" by the people in our government who are supposed to be representing and protecting our best interests. We certainly do not want the EUROPEAN SYSTEM in the U.S.!

\* \* \* \* \*

## **SHOOT EM DOWN MENTAL-**

**ITY SURFACING AGAIN:** After being defeated by the U.S. Senate in 1998 the proponents of a "gung ho, shoot first - ask questions later" mentality are again surfacing to this misguided cause. Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater has been asked by a U.S. Congressman to consider requiring the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to shoot down "SUSPECT" airplanes which could "POSSIBLY" be carrying drugs. Secretary Slater has agreed to consult with the U.S. Cost Guard commandant on the issue. While the General Aviation industry vehemently abhors all drug smuggling activities and especially their use of airplanes, they also strenuously oppose any policy of allowing the USCG to shoot down aircraft when they merely SUSPECT it may be carrying drugs. Even the most hardened known murderers get the benefit of a trial and must be proven guilty before execution is permitted. Vigilantism was abolished years ago! Even if this policy were to be approved, the USCG would be the wrong agency for the job as it would have to spend millions to equip its' aircraft and train aircrews when we already have well equipped military aircraft with highly trained aircrews which would be far more qualified to perform such a task. Having flown into the U.S. from Central America and Mexico every year for the past 14 years, I have yet to have had a VFR flight plan forwarded thus requiring considerable airborne communicating through U.S. ATC, FSS, and relays before penetrating U.S. airspace. The U.S. never knew I was coming and the thought of being intercepted and shot down terrifies me. I repeat "Vigilantism was abolished in the U.S. years ago!"



### *Montana and the Sky*

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# **Administration Budget Conceals a Time Bomb**

**By: Phil Boyer, President**

**Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)**

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Never mind the Year 2000 computer crisis and possible chaos when FAA computers cancel all flight plans because they think the airplane hasn't been invented yet! General aviation is sitting on a different time bomb.

The Clinton Administration's fiscal 1999 FAA budget hides a \$1.7 billion aviation tax increase and a shift to user fees as sole source of FAA funding by the year 2003. That scheme, tucked away in budget notes, could blast you and me right out of the skies.

And in what would amount to a legalized scam, the Administration has suggested replacing our Airport and Airway Trust Fund with a vaguely defined "transportation fund." The evident aim is to

divert today's aviation taxes (and new user fees!) to non-aviation transportation projects. FAA's spending is budgeted to rise only \$600 million; where is the rest of that \$1.7 billion tax increase going?

The Administration ignores this fact: Congress has twice rejected user fees. Even the National Civil Aviation Review Commission (NCARC) – which is stacked against general aviation – judged user fees inappropriate for GA. Also ignored is aviation's public benefit, which demands that all taxpayers contribute an appropriate 15-20% of FAA budget needs through the general fund.

Why this stubborn push for user fees? Simple. User fees would give the Department of Transportation a blank check. Charge at will, spend

on whim. Virtually no Congressional control, only nominal oversight. And the flying public – pilots and passengers – would have no voice, no recourse.

We ask Congress to reject once again the wasteful user fee proposal. Set FAA on track to greater efficiency and improved management by making it an independent agency. Freed from DOT's political maneuvering and given the sufficient funding Congress has assured it, FAA can continue to run a safe, efficient air traffic control system.



## **CALENDAR**

**March 12 - 14** - Women in Aviation Conference, Denver, CO (937)839-4647.

**March 26 - 28** - Idaho Aeronautics Conference, Boise, ID (208)334-8776.

**April 1 - 3** - NATA/PAMA Supershow, Kansas City, MO (703)845-9000.

**April 18 - 19** - CAP SAR training exercise, Red Lodge Airport.

**April 19 - 25** - Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, FL.

**April 24** - Montana Aeronautics Board Meeting, Helena.

**April 25** - AOM Board Meeting, Helena.

**May 11 - 16** - Aviation Technology Week, Laurel.

**May 23 - 25** - Benchmark Annual Work Session

**May 29 - 31** - CAP State Conference, Yogo Inn, Lewistown.

**June 6** - Miles City Airport Appreciation Day.

**June 21** - Beacon Star Father's Day Fly-in with Frank's poorboy sourdough pancake breakfast served 8 - 11 a.m.

**June 23 - 26** - Women's Air Race Classic, Santa Fe, NM to Batavia, OH.

**July 17-19** - Schafer Meadows Annual Work Session

**July 29 - August 4** - 46<sup>th</sup> Annual EAA Fly-in Convention, Oshkosh, WI.

**September 11-13** - Laurel Fly-in and Swap Meet.

**September 18-20** - Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Kalispell.

**September 19** - Aerotronics Annual Open House, Billings.

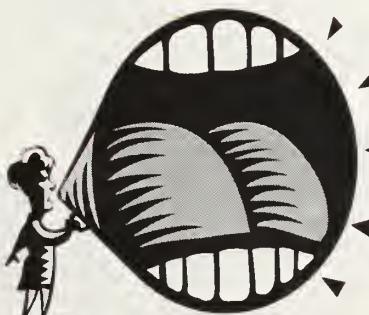
## **B-17 "Wild West" Spring Tour**

A flying example of one of the greatest military airplanes ever built, the Boeing B-17 "Flying Fortress," will be featured on a national tour beginning April 23.

Sponsored by the EAA the 1998 EAA "Wild West" spring schedule runs through July 15 and features the EAA Foundation's restored B-17 bomber *Aluminum Overcast*. The airplane will stop at 22 locations in four states through the western United States before returning to its home in Oshkosh, WI. Stops will be made in Arizona, California, Oregon and Washington.

At each stop, special programs and/or tours have been scheduled to help visitors discover more about the four-engine bomber. The tours are organized with the cooperation and assistance of local EAA chapters and will feature a complete look at the airplane's interior and exterior as well as presentations explaining more about the development and use of the B-17. The airplane's flight crew will be available at each stop to answer questions.

For more information call (800)564-6322 or explore EAA's World Wide Web site at <http://www.eaa.org>.



## **T-shirts Available**

If you forgot to get your 1998 Montana Aviation Conference t-shirt while you were in Billings or weren't able to make it and would like a memento it's not too late. T-shirts are available for \$10 + shipping by calling Shelley Peterson at Corporate Air in Billings (406)247-3188.

# 1998 Montana Aviation Conference

(watch for more photos in future issues)



A banner that encompassed the entire atrium/lobby area of the Holiday Inn acknowledged all sponsors and exhibitors at the Montana Aviation Conference. Without the generosity of these sponsors and the willingness of the exhibitors to display each year this conference would not be possible. Thanks to all of you who support Montana aviation.



Above, Tim McGinnis, Billings Conference Chairman breathes a sigh of relief as the Thursday luncheon begins kicking off the 1998 Montana Aviation Conference. Below, Jim Currie, Chief of Staff, Department of Transportation, welcomes participants to the 14<sup>th</sup> annual conference.



Gary Hunt of Air BP hosts the speakers, sponsors and exhibitors at a special function recognizing each for their unique contribution to making the conference happen. Many thanks to Gary and Air BP for hosting this event year after year and to Air BP's local dealer Corporate Air of Billings.



Jim Coyne, President of the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) visits with Bob Palmersheim a long time NATA member of Lynch Flying Service. NATA is the national organization that represents the Montana Aviation Trades Association's fixed base and commercial operators on the national level.



Mike Ferguson presents Dr. Jerry Cockrell with a Montana silversmith bolo tie in appreciation for attending the Montana Aviation Conference. Dr. Cockrell generously gives of his time to entertain in an open session each year at the conference. Montana is very fortunate to have Dr. Cockrell back in Big Sky Country.



The aviation conference is elated to have AirSure, Ltd. as a conference contributor each year. Representing AirSure are Jerry Wortley of Boise, Idaho and John Lord from Golden, Colorado.



Gary Woltermann (left) and Ron Woltermann (right) talented pianists entertained folks at functions throughout the three-days. Both men are accomplished aviators and musicians...their music was enjoyed by all.



Rhonda the Rodeo Queen livened Friday evening up with her mobile horse complete with propeller, ailerons, rudder and tail. Mike Ferguson, Marian McGinnis, Allen Rickman, Peggy Booth, Rich Broberg and Jerry Wortley helped Rhonda hoot, holler and yee-hah while dedicating a song to the Montana Aviation Conference. The group in bandanas and cowboy hats provided backup harmony for Rhonda----Jerry Wortley was the lucky guy to wear the dashing 10-gallon green cowboy hat and shoot pistols in unison while accompanying the group.

# In Memory of Robert J. Ray

Bob Ray was born March 31, 1929 in Pierre, SD. Bob's interest in airplanes began early on when he had a ride with his Dad's friend, Bob Wiley, in a single place Aeronca C-2—sitting on Wiley's lap. This interest grew when his cousin, Freddie Ray learned to fly and bought an Eaglerock Bi-plane.

While in high school in Lead, SD, Bob spent summer vacations working in the oilfields at Newcastle, WY where he took flight training. He obtained his Private Pilot license in 1946 in a Luscombe 8A at age 17.

Bob graduated in 1950 from the ROTC aviation course at Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, MO. Among others, he flew a Fairchild PT-26 there and purchased a sporty low wing Aeronca LW.

Upon graduation Bob married and returned to South Dakota to work with his Dad in the oil business and traded the Aeronca for a Bellanca 14-13 Cruisair. In 1955 Bob purchased the FBO at Black Hills Airport in Spearfish, SD and obtained his Commercial and Flight Instructor Certificates.

Upon selling the FBO in 1958, Bob instructed at Embry-Riddle in Miami while taking the course for his Airframe and Powerplant License. Bob worked as an Agricultural Demonstration and Training Pilot for a Champion Aircraft sales company and traveled to South America to deliver Champions by way of Cuba. In South America, Bob was convinced to remain and fly as a bush pilot out of San Ramonc,

Peru until 1962, when he began his own Bush airline, Acorlineas Amazonas, at Ocalli, Peru. This became the second largest airline on several occasions, when other lines had less undamaged airplanes than his two Super Cubs. When revolutionists informed him these airplanes now belonged to the new government of Peru in 1968, Bob was forced to leave Peru and return to the US.

Combs Aviation needed pilots for their expanding air mail operations out of Billings and Bob went to work for them and became pilot at Havre until 1972. In 1972 Bob went to work for Buster Ness at Rudyard as an ag pilot until 1976. After moving to Denver to fly for Combs Freight Air in 1976, Bob returned to Montana in 1985 to fly for Big Sky Airlines until 1989. He flew as UPS pilot and fire patrol pilot for Lynch Flying Service to close out his career.

Bob died in his home on January 9, 1998. He should have written a book. It would have been much more interesting and colorful in his own words..



Robert J. Ray



## Miracle of America Museum

The Miracle of America Museum just south of Polson on US 93 has enough interesting aviation items on display that it is well worth your visit. A cast iron toy "Spirit of Saint Louis" airplane is one of the smallest items while an A-7-D Corsair II jet attack bomber is the largest. The jet needs some repair work done on its wings.

Gil Mangels, museum founder, and machinist and welder, by trade, is seeking a maintenance manual to aid in removing the wing stubs from the fuselage before beginning the repairs. He is also looking for these few missing items to complete the jet: a joy stick, a 28x9.99x14 22 ply tire, missile racks and wing tanks.

Many visitors' favorites in the aviation section are the 9 cylinder Continental cut-away (prop hub needed) and a J-54 jet engine cut-away. A tail rudder off a twin Beech is the largest intact piece left of the plane in which the Montana Band took their last ride.

Inside the main 10,000 sq. ft. main building a large oak showcase is overflowing with aviation memorabilia. Next to the antique motorcycle collection (30 of them) is a mid 1920s Henderson inline 4 cylinder engine with Heath parts to convert it for airplane use. Gil has a four foot section of the cockpit part of

the fuselage but needs help finding more parts.

There are 26 buildings in the Pioneer Village located behind the main building. Each has a different theme and is complete with artifacts.

Be sure to stop and check out the non-profit Miracle of America Museum. For more information, contact the museum at 58176 Highway 93, Polson, MT 59860, phone (406) 883-6804, [museum@cyberport.net](mailto:museum@cyberport.net) or [www.cyberport.net/museum](http://www.cyberport.net/museum).



The 1971 A-7-D Corsair attack bomber is a featured attraction at the Miracle of America Museum.



# **AMAA Conducts Annual Meeting**

The Association of Montana Aerial Applicators (AMAA) met in late January at the Heritage Inn at Great Falls for its annual meeting. The meeting included a Pesticide Recertification Workshop conducted by the Montana Department of Agriculture and was held in conjunction with the Montana Agricultural Business Association's Convention.

Industry sessions were offered together with the recertification credits. Ag aviation exhibitors participated in a trade show, displaying the latest products/services available to the aerial applicators.

The day concluded with AMAA's annual banquet. Rick Coyle of the Northern Ag Network of Billings was the featured banquet speaker.

Officers elected for the upcoming year are: Brian Schwend, President; Linda Blain, Vice-President; Tom Hlavnicka, Secretary-Treasurer. AMAA Board of Directors are: Jim Heppner, Darrold Hutchinson, Mark Marnuzich, Harold Yearger, Dan Simpson, Jerry Weibert, Mike Biggerstaff, Linda Blain, Tom Hlavnicka and Sandy Birch as the ex-officio member.



*1998 AMAA President Brian Schwend (center) visits with Rick Coyle, Northern Ag Network and Lee Ohlinger of DowElanco during the evening banquet.*



*At right, Darrold Hutchinson, outgoing AMAA President presents Bill Sheets with a plaque for his many years of service and support of AMAA. Above, Will Metz, AMAA's representative on the Montana Aeronautics Board briefs the organization on Montana Aeronautics Division and Board activities.*



*Attendees gather at the closing banquet and reflect on a productive day....earning education credits and renewing friendships.*



# EAA AIR ACADEMY FUND RAISER A SUCCESS

Many thanks to all of you who donated \$2 to obtain a "stick-on" airplane at the Montana Aviation Conference. This year \$1,074 was generously donated by many in attendance at the conference.

Mr. and Mrs. Willy Rimby, winners of a round-trip ticket for two donated by Delta Airlines, chose to auction off the tickets with the money raised going to the EAA scholarship fund. Frank Bass was the auctioneer and John and Tricia McKenna of Bozeman the successful bidder. Many thanks to the Rimbys and McKennas for adding \$750 received for the airline tickets to the scholarship fund. As Willy said, "if I can't fly myself in my own aircraft, I don't go!" Willy of Lewistown has been flying for close to 50 years—what a guy!

In 1993 the Rimbys were also winners of Skywest Airline tickets and chose to auction those tickets as well with proceeds donated to the EAA scholarship fund.

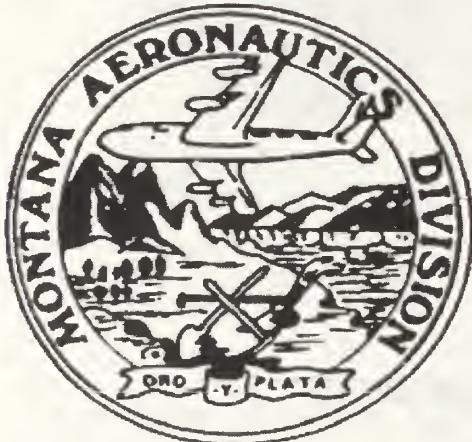
The donations are used to send a young Montanan to the EAA Air Academy held each July in Oshkosh, WI. The Acronautics Division sponsors an aviation awareness art contest and the senior division winner is awarded the trip which includes tuition to the academy.

As in past years, Northwest Airlines has willingly agreed to provide complimentary round-trip air transportation to Oshkosh for the lucky winner. Thanks Northwest Airlines for your kindness and support of this important aviation education program.

A big thanks to all of you who give so generously to help make a young Montanan's dream come true!!

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